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Rex Murphy: Spare us the yoga-mat mantras about the environment and the economy

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Body

"The environment and the economy go hand in hand." - Environment Minister Catherine McKenna, Feb. 23, 2018

"The environment and the economy go hand in hand." -Environment Minister Catherine McKenna, March 10, 2018

The Book of Twitter

It is the most frequent iteration of our ***climate*** crusader minister and her fellow environmental superhero, "Clark" Trudeau - that the environment and the economy are halves of one project, that they go together, and in their most favoured formulation, that they go "hand in hand."

First, the concepts are each too vast, complex and extraordinarily various for any attempt at assigning a one-to-one equivalence. The environment is, when you stop to think about it, literally everything there is except you; and even then you are part of the environment of everyone else. The economy, while not infinite like its partner in this spurious equation, is nonetheless comprised of millions or billions of subordinate elements and interactions.

Essentially Ms. McKenna's simplistic slogan tries to pass off as a truism, a self-evident axiom, an impossible-to-achieve, equal and mutual correspondence between two of the most intricately dynamic, various systems known to peoplekind. What a dream that is.

As explanatory or descriptive of the dynamics of a modern industrial nation, it is simplistic mush.

This should be no surprise. The simplistic is the natural idiom of the current government. Ms. McKenna shares with Mr. Trudeau a fondness for slogan rhetoric, delivered in a staccato of progressive thought-bubbles, stale haikus on what Canada is or is not all about, and the unimpeachable verities and virtues of sacerdotal diversity.

Reality can't be captured in a yoga-mat motto. Far from hand in hand, the economy and the environment are always going to be in strong tension, sometimes in actual fraught opposition.

For example, consider the question: Should one build a small waste-disposal plant, get 15 jobs for a small town, or save the rare puff-breasted, beakless codswallop? Both cannot be accommodated. It's either jobs or the squawk-challenged codswallop.

Supporters of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion rally outside the Alberta Legislature in Edmonton on April 12, 2018.

One social ambition has to be purchased at the cost, partial or total, of another. This is, as we learned from Lucretius, the nature of things.

However, it is in the political and ideological domain where the assertion that the economy and the environment go hand in hand is seen to be utterly fallacious, not just wrong, but precisely the negative of the reality.

For professional activists and protesters, the environment is far less sweet Mother Nature and all her pandas, as much as a concept-weapon to be used to confound and obstruct the economy. This is the first principle of environmental activism: cloak politics in sentimental naturism. The campaign against Alberta energy is the infallible demonstration of its truth.

Warmists and their allies propagandized the oilsands into the satanic symbol of the Earth's ***doom*** through global warming. They did a blitzkrieg communications attack on it, by pushing it as the "dirtiest oil on the planet," the "tipping point" for global warming, a big oil juggernaut in secret command over governments, and as an industrial negation of Canada's commitment to carbon-emission penury.

And let us give them credit for the cunning of their campaign: they took a single, globally insignificant development in a northern part of Canada and made it, via propaganda and well-funded campaigns professionally directed, and by intertwining it with always hypertensive Aboriginal rights, into the world's pre-eminent symbol of the ***eco***-apocalypse. "Stop the oilsands and save the world" has been the invariable battle cry.

A demonstrator holds a flag with an image of Earth during a protest against the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, outside a meeting of G7 finance ministers and central bank governors in Whistler, B.C., on June 2, 2018.

For two decades - and largely unanswered by government or industry - the NGOs, foundations, financiers and activists have portrayed Alberta's economic mainstay and the production of energy as nothing but a reckless scheme of the greedy capitalist system, putting to hazard without a moral second thought the very future of all of nature, the planet and its people. They established the mindset, the "mentality" of how oil and gas are to be thought about in editorial sanctums, on the shallow turf of university campuses, and in the lazy minds of timid politicians.

The economic justification for the oilsands was turned into a bludgeon by the warmists, proof that it was all just greed, greed alone, and that the industrial West was willing to purchase economic well-being for its pampered citizens, mindless of the mortal hazard to the entire planet. They worked a great sell of this very over-egged narrative. They used nature - the environment - as their umbrella for an utterly radical ideological agenda. And they relegated valid economic concerns - the creation of jobs, stability of government, preservation of prosperity - as mere plaster masks for ruthless capitalism. The economy is the enemy of the environment has been their absolute core message.

Anywhere you find Green radicalism, Green advocacy, Greenpeace, or Green parties, you will find attacks on industry and jobs wrapped up in the false flag of "concern for the environment" and the avoidance of global-warming perdition.

To go to one large particular, the precious Paris agreement is also in conflict with Canada's economy. Every environmental Twitter caterwaul points out that Canada's promise to meet its Paris accord commitments cannot be squared with its promise to build the Trans Mountain - not to mention the idea of resurrecting Energy East. The IPCC doesn't want the oilsands or pipelines, at all or ever. On the basic logic of this point, the warmists are right - the Paris agreement and the expansion of the Alberta economy are nullifications of each other.

Taken then in summary, the proposition that the environment and economy go together, are as one, share hands, is the blatant negative of what is actually the case.

More than 1,000 truckers take part in a 22-kilometre convoy in Nisku, Alta., on Dec. 19, 2018, to support the oil and gas industry in the province.

Environmentalist opposition and obstruction is what created the political and public atmosphere that enabled or gave plausible justification for the blizzard of regulations, endless hearings, court challenges and judgments that led to the cancellation or abandonment of pipeline projects and contributed to Fort McMurray's precarious state after both the fire and the price decline. All of these elements combined to rob Alberta and Canada of billions of dollars of

needed revenue and tens of thousands of jobs, incited dangerous tensions in the Confederation, and stimulated foreign donations to professional anti-oil activists in their campaign to kill the oilsands and impede and obstruct any element of energy development.

The political, activist, ideological "the environment and the economy go hand in hand" mantra is an intentional delusion. The environmental movement is an implacable foe of the industrial economy of the West, and has a singular dedication to killing the oil economy of Alberta.

Understanding this, Minister McKenna's chirpy slogan is a mockery of the biggest internal issue in Canadian politics today.

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